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OPEN LETTERS.

MOUNTING PLANTS FOR USE IN POPULAR LECTURES.

To the Editors of the Botanical Gazette: In winter, at our State Agricultural College, some one of the botanical department is often required to instruct students who elect short courses in grasses, clovers, other forage crops, or weeds. In like manner these subjects are often presented at farmers' institutes and agricultural fairs. Bunches or bundles of these plants are too easily damaged by handling to be of much service. I have found the following scheme for exhibiting plants on such occasions eminently satisfactory.

Procure some wire screen thirty inches wide and five or six feet long, having about four wires to the inch; fasten on one side numerous stout strips of wood an inch or more in thickness. Make a mate to this and we have a press of heroic size. With large driers and thin sheets grasses and other plants are pressed at full length. Procure some rather firm and tough manilla paper two feet wide and perhaps three feet long. For longer plants a sheet can be spliced by pasting a piece of the paper across a seam on the back. These manilla sheets of suitable length are then bound with brown or black muslin or other material neatly pasted over the edges and ends. This makes the sheets stiffer and protects the edges in transportation. The specimens are placed in suitable position and sewed fast with carpet thread of a dull green color, and where the leaves are broad fish glue is also used. Over the long stitches on the back side paper is pasted, *a la* buttons in a dry goods store, to prevent the plants from working loose in case a thread is broken.

Sew or paste on a large card containing name of plant and a few other items of importance. Two of Dennison's No. 12 spring hooks clasp the top of a sheet and hold it to a cord or thin strip of wood strung about a half at suitable height.

To transport specimens a crate or frame is made consisting of sides only of half-inch basswood or pine nailed to three crosspieces, one by two and one-half inches. Near the end of each strip is a wire staple clinched on the side next the specimens. These staples serve to hold three strong straps to buckle about a bundle. To protect from accidental rain wrap the bundle of specimens with oilcloth before binding in the crate.

A large herbarium case is constructed, into which these long sheets are shoved sideways, each sheet having a name on each edge. Of these sheets we have at least 250 species mounted.—W. J. BEAL, *Agricultural College, Mich.*